

# SALGA COMMEMORATES WORLD AIDS DAY 2024



**THEME: "EQUAL RIGHTS, EQUAL CARE"**



The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) joins the nation and global community in commemorating World AIDS Day on 1 December 2024. This annual observance serves as a powerful reminder of the need to remain steadfast in preventing new HIV infections, providing essential services to those living with HIV, and upholding human rights globally.

This year marks the 37th commemoration of World AIDS Day, first observed on 1 December 1988, under the theme, "Equal Rights, Equal Care".

## Global and Regional Progress in the HIV Response

The UNAIDS Global AIDS Update 2024 highlights significant achievements:

- **Fewer HIV Infections:** New HIV infections in 2023 were at their lowest since the late 1980s, with a 39% decrease globally compared to 2010. Sub-Saharan Africa saw the steepest reduction, at 56%.
- **Fewer AIDS-Related Deaths:** AIDS-related deaths dropped by 51% in 2023 compared to 2010.
- **Increased Life Expectancy:** In sub-Saharan Africa, life expectancy rebounded from 56.3 years in 2010 to 61.1 years in 2023.

Despite this progress, adolescent girls and young women aged 15–24 years in sub-Saharan Africa continue to face disproportionately high HIV incidence rates.

## The South African Context

South Africa accounts for 20% of global new HIV infections and 20% of people living with HIV worldwide. The Thembeisa Model (Version 4.7) reports:

- HIV prevalence has plateaued at 12.6% for the past five years, yet the total number of people living with HIV has grown, reaching approximately 8 million.
- Prevalence varies by province, with KwaZulu-Natal at 16.5% and the Western Cape at 7.3%.

## Human Rights and Health Systems: Cornerstones of the HIV Response

The progress in combating HIV/AIDS is intrinsically linked to the protection of human rights. Discriminatory laws, policies, and practices remain barriers to access to prevention, testing, treatment, and care. Upholding human rights is critical to achieving an inclusive and effective HIV response.

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This World AIDS Day, SALGA emphasizes the need to protect everyone's health by safeguarding everyone's rights.

## SALGA's Role in the HIV, TB, and STI Response

Municipalities play a critical role in addressing HIV, TB, and STIs, yet they face challenges such as unclear roles, capacity gaps, and funding shortages. To address these challenges, SALGA has:

- 1. Developed a Position Paper:** A lobbying tool to strengthen local government responses to HIV, TB, and STIs.
- 2. Capacity Building:** Partnered with SANAC to host training sessions for councillors and municipal officials to enhance their ability to respond to these epidemics.
- 3. Advocated for AIDS Councils:** Encouraged the establishment of Local and District AIDS Councils to coordinate local responses.
- 4. Integrated HIV in Municipal Planning:** Assessed the inclusion of HIV, TB, and STIs in municipalities' Integrated Development Plans (IDPs).

- 5. Shared Best Practices:** Facilitated knowledge-sharing sessions among municipalities, with the next session scheduled for 5 December 2024.

## Advocacy and Collaboration

SALGA continues to lobby SANAC for additional funding to bolster municipal HIV responses and has provided detailed input into the development of the SANAC Multisectoral Policy Framework for HIV, TB, and STIs.

## Commemorating World AIDS Day 2024

SALGA will participate in the national World AIDS Day commemoration hosted by the Buffalo City Metro at the Sisa Dukashe Stadium in Mdantsane, Eastern Cape, on 1 December 2024.

Together, let us work towards ensuring equal rights and equal care for all as we strive to end AIDS as a public health threat.

**Ends.**